



How to use the new standard NPS typefaces

Typography is fundamental to graphic design standards. Using consistent typefaces ensures that the public will readily recognize National Park Service products. The Unigrid publication system introduced in the 1970s provides a solid foundation for extending consistent typographic standards to other NPS products.

The new NPS graphic design standards introduce two typefaces for all NPS graphics: the serif face, NPS Rawlinson, and a complementary sans-serif face, Frutiger. NPS Rawlinson was designed specifically for the National Park Service. Its full range of weights, italics, and

condensed versions makes it suitable for applications ranging from signs and exhibits to publications and maps.

New NPS sign standards feature NPS Roadway, a variation of NPS Rawlinson optimized for reading at a distance.

Frutiger replaces the type family (Helvetica) previously used in many NPS applications. Its open letter forms make it more readable on signs and maps. Its clean, modern forms complement NPS Rawlinson.

Using NPS Rawlinson

- Use NPS Rawlinson for titles and subtitles. Its custom qualities are well-suited to NPS products and enhance the NPS graphic design standards.
- Use NPS Rawlinson for lengthy text settings. Serif typefaces are generally easier to read in long bodies of text.
- Do not use Rawlinson for identity-related titles such as park names or agency and departmental identification. Identity-related typography should be set in Frutiger Bold.
- Do not use Rawlinson at very small sizes in complicated applications such as maps and diagram labels.

Selected versions of the NPS Rawlinson typeface:

NPS Rawlinson

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 0123456789

NPS Rawlinson Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 0123456789

Using Frutiger

- Frutiger should be used for all identity-related information such as park names and agency and departmental titles, especially when used in the black band.
- Frutiger should be used for short typographic elements, such as captions and sidebars. It may be used in longer text settings, but careful consideration should be given to ensure legibility.
- Frutiger should be used when very small sizes are required in complicated applications such as maps and diagram labels.

Selected versions of the Frutiger typeface:

Frutiger Roman

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Frutiger Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Some basic guidelines to typesetting

Text line style

Flush left, ragged right text settings are recommended for most all NPS materials. With a flush left, ragged right setting, normal word spacing is ensured.

Type that is set flush left distributes excess space at the end of the lines, resulting in an irregular pattern that enhances ease in reading. Type set justified, centered, or flush right may be more difficult to read.

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Upper and lower case

Avoid the use of all capital letters. All-capital text settings may slow reading speed by as much as 13 percent and take up to 30 percent more space.

We read words by their shapes
The shapes of all-capital settings provide fewer shape clues than upper- and lower-case settings.

WE READ WORDS BY THEIR SHAPES.
THE SHAPES OF ALL-CAPITAL SETTINGS PROVIDE FEWER SHAPE CLUES THAN UPPER- AND LOWER-CASE SETTINGS.

Leading

Leading is the amount of space between lines of type. Adding space between lines helps to improve legibility of smaller text sizes and longer line lengths. Typically 2 points of leading is appropriate for most text settings.

Even smaller text settings can be made more legible by adding the proper amount of space between the lines of type. Longer lines of type also require more space to make them easier to read.

Even smaller text settings can be made more legible by adding the proper amount of space between the lines of type. Longer lines of type also require more space to make them easier to read. Tightly set lines tire the eyes and are more confusing to the reader.

Line length

Text lines that are too long inhibit readability. The total number of letters and spaces per line should be between 40 and 70. Lines that are too long often cause the same line to be read twice.

Long lines of type can be difficult to read, especially when the lines are very close together. Short column width, increased leading, and flush left alignment can all help to improve the legibility of the text. Long lines of type can be difficult to read, especially when the lines are very close together. Short column width, increased leading, and flush left alignment can all help to improve the legibility of the text.

Bolds and italics

Bolds and italics should be used only to provide emphasis. Lengthy amounts of text in either style reduce legibility.

The use of bold type in lengthy text settings should be avoided. Bold text takes up more room and often creates legibility problems. Limited use of bold text is an effective means of providing emphasis.

The use of italic type in lengthy text settings should be avoided. Italic text takes up less room than regular text, but often creates legibility problems. Overuse of italics defeats its purpose.

Paragraphs

For certain texts (brochures, bulletins, websites, etc.) paragraphs may be distinguished by skipping one line. For others (books and other lengthy texts) indentations are more appropriate.

For most typographic settings, a complete line return can be used to separate paragraphs.

This uses more space, but results in more clear alignment and organization.

Paragraph indentation should be used in long text settings to clearly indicate the beginning of a new paragraph.
The amount of indentation usually equals the height of the type size. 8 pt. type is indented 8 pts., for example

Contrast

Anything that reduces contrast reduces legibility. Text over a tint or color background will decrease legibility and should be used with discretion. Lengthy amounts of text reversed out of a black background can cause eye strain.

Use care when setting lengthy amounts of text over colored or tinted backgrounds. Generally, anything that reduces contrast reduces legibility. Also, body copy reversed out of black or a strong color may cause annoying visual "noise" that reduces legibility.

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10%

20%

35%

60%